

Avoiding the Pain of Panda

How To Prevent Google Panda from Harming Your Site's SEM Position

Getting strong rankings within the Google search engine is important for any affiliate marketer. Therefore, it's critical that affiliate marketers also understand how to ensure their sites overcome the issues that the Google Panda algorithm update was designed to address.

Here are some tips for making your site as Panda-proof as possible:

Post Original Content

Nothing does more good for a site than content you wrote yourself. Audit your site. How much of your content is original? Try to get the percentage of original content as high as possible. This has the added advantage of enabling you to speak in your company's voice to your target audience. So, while you're revisiting your content, take the time to make it truly your own.

Avoid Duplicate Content

Google wants to ensure that your content - and your site - is as valuable as possible to visitors. This means you shouldn't repeat the same content on page after page. Find a new way to say it. This adds value and helps you avoid a painful hit from Panda. If you have the same message on multiple pages - such as calls to action (Call Us for a Consultation!), you will want to change those messages and customize them for each page - or remove them from pages where they aren't relevant.

🔄 About Google Panda

The Google Panda update was introduced in February 2011 to lower the rank of "low-quality sites" in favor of more content-rich sites. The initial rollout was said to have affected 12% of all search results but soon drew criticism from those who said the new algorithm favored copyright infringers over the sites where content originated.

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Relevancy Matters

When you're evaluating site content, compare the content you're giving visitors against the target keywords that would bring them to each page. If you're targeting the term "air conditioners" on a page with content about "humidifiers," you need to rework either the target keywords or the content. And don't forget about the ads on your site. Posting ads that have no relevance to the content of a page not only hurts conversion - it can bring Panda trouble as well.

Beware Over-Optimization

We've said this before, but it bears repeating: Google wants quality sites and pages for visitors. If your site/pages read like SEO soup, you're not adding value and can expect to take hit from the Panda update. The same kinds of over-optimization that once served your site so well now may mean your search engine rankings drop off dramatically.

Watch Page and Site Bounce Rates

If visitors are leaving a page or your site quickly, it's a sign that they didn't find what they were looking for - and that gets to the very heart of the Google Panda update. If visitors aren't getting what they were searching for, Google will replace your site with others that deliver on visitor expectations. Pay particular attention to the clickthrough percentage for referrals to your site that come from Google traffic.

↻ Worth Noting

Google wants quality sites that are rich in content that is relevant to visitors. If you make this the ultimate goal of any site updates or changes that you make, you will be serving your interests well.

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Inbound Links Still Matter

Inbound links are important because a link from a quality site within your niche is viewed as a vote of confidence in the quality of your site and its content. If you have links from sites of poor quality (or relevance) to your site, those will hurt your effort to be seen as a quality site.

These tips will help you make your site and its pages be viewed as valuable and relevant, which will help you avoid painful Panda problems.

Feeling Unfairly Targeted? Let Google Know

If you feel that your site's quality has been unfairly judged, you can say so in a forum established by Google to address such concerns:

<http://groups.google.com/a/googleproductforums.com/forum/#!category-topic/webmasters/crawling-indexing--ranking/NNinlDYGgwM>

Stay Informed

We monitor news about this and other Google algorithm updates. To stay informed about Google Panda, and all news relevant to affiliate marketing, check out the Affiliate Marketing Digest: <http://www.schaafpc.com/page/affiliate-marketing-digest-news-affiliate-marketers>